

Notes Summary of Professional Standards Advisory Board Work Session

August 20, 2009

10:00 AM



A call to order was announced at 10:00 a.m. by Pat Mapes. Dr. Tony Bennett made the opening comments. He thanked the board for attending and said that this “Will be a journey, it will be more than a work session, an opportunity to work through this issue.” He thanked the guests for attending today. He was encouraged that we’ve had a debate about the issue of quality because it is about education and education matters. Bennett thanked them for their commitment to education. He mentioned a quote from an email that read: “what are you trying to do to us?” He followed up by saying “It’s not about Tony Bennett or teachers or educators or administrators being against each other: it’s about addressing structures within education; it’s not about people. It’s about making education better.”

Pat Mapes then opened the meeting by highlighting for the Board the Updates on REPA Revisions. He summarized revisions that had already been made to the working draft of the rule sent to Board members and additional revisions that had been identified but were not yet incorporated into the draft. The board was then encouraged to discuss the proposed rules.

The Board’s first discussion topic was about the process for suspending licenses. David Goodwin, board member, was concerned about a teacher getting a “fair trial” when appealing to get a license back after it had been suspended. The Board questioned who had the authority to revoke licenses. Matt Tusing answered that the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Professional Standards Advisory Board has dual authority to revoke a license. Becky Bowman clarified that the State Superintendent makes the recommendation for a license to be revoked or suspended and the Advisory Board has the authority to create rules under which a revocation or suspension is carried out. The hearing process is governed by statutory procedures called the Administrative Orders and Procedures Act.

The Board went on to discuss the Building Level Administrator beginning residency program. They discussed ideas about who would notify the IDOE of a building administrator’s progress and how many years into the residency program they would report it. They then discussed how long the program should be: one, two or three years. They all agreed that the beginning residency programs for various categories of license holders need to be consistent in length.

They followed up with conversation about the beginning residency for District Level Administrators and the fact that it would mirror the Building Level Administrator beginning residency program. They also talked about a Residency Program for Superintendents. Some felt it was a good idea but others noted that a residency program would just be repetition for a superintendent. Pat Mapes suggested a mentoring program for new superintendents instead of a residency program. The Board responded favorably to that suggestion.

The Board then moved on to talk about their 4 big tasks. Joyce Johnstone identified these as examine and redefine rules, change test scores, redesign teaching standards to be in line with k-12 standards, and redesign the program approval process. She posed the question that “we are looking at licenses that are based on standards, why aren’t we also looking at the standards?” Pat Mapes said that the DOE is working to align the teacher standards to the K-12 standards and will present that work to the Board as soon as it’s ready.

The Board discussed the pedagogy hour requirements. Carrie Billman asked “What if someone goes over the maximum hour requirements?” Pat Mapes answered that the applicant’s program would be accepted. The minimum and maximum credit hour limits will be monitored as part of program approval but will not limit individual applicants’ eligibility if they have more than the maximum hours of pedagogy. She then asked why there is a proposed minimum and maximum on the amount of hours for content and pedagogy, respectively. Pat explained that we certainly want prospective teachers to have sufficient pedagogy and practice teaching but we want to concentrate more on content knowledge in the future. Comments were made that we don’t want the teachers to be there 5+ years in order to complete a program.

The last thing the Board discussed was the Workplace Specialist license and the addition of four content areas to the Workplace Specialist category. They agree it might be a good idea but had questions about whether these new content areas under Workplace Specialist would be used to move courses from the academic program to the vocational program to save funding at schools. Tony Bennett commented on that by saying “Workplace Specialists areas would create the freedom to move kids who really want a vocational field experience within the schools.” George questioned “but are we maintaining the quality of education for our kids by not hiring qualified educators?” Pat Mapes answered with “we wouldn’t RIF teachers to save money. It would just give us the flexibility to find ‘more’ qualified teachers because of the ‘real life’ work experiences requirements (i.e. a car mechanic with 4,000 hours of experience teaching mechanics shop class).” The Board also discussed the need for a pedagogy requirement for the Workplace Specialist and George commented that it would already be built in because we’ve identified it as 4,000 work hours of experience.

The meeting was adjourned by Pat Mapes at approximately 12:30 p.m.